



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Contact: Jeff Lungren/Terry Shawn
202-225-2492

Crime Subcommittee Hearing Tuesday on Legislation Addressing Violence Against Judges and Witnesses

What: Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1751, the "Secure Access to Justice and Court Protection Act of 2005"

Who: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security - Rep. Howard Coble (R-N.C.), Chairman

When: 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Where: 2141 Rayburn Building

According to the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, there are almost 700 threats made each year against federal judges. In many cases, federal judges have had security details assigned to them for fear of an attack by members of a violent gang or a drug organization, as well as by disgruntled litigants. Recent events such as the killing Judge Rowland Barton, a Fulton County Judge, his court reporter, a deputy sheriff and a federal law enforcement agent, along with the murder of U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow's husband and her mother in Chicago have raised concerns as to the United States Marshals Service's management and handling of judicial security.

BACKGROUND...

- ✓ The United States Marshals Service is responsible for protecting Federal judges and their families, and for security at Federal courthouses. The recent violence has also sparked specific concerns about the Marshals Service's ability to provide adequate security.
- ✓ At the State level, there exists a significant lack of security for judges, prosecutors and witnesses, given the absence of any significant witness protection programs and the need for more resources for State courts to conduct threat assessments and provide basic security.

H.R. 1751 WOULD...

- ⇒ Increase penalties to a mandatory minimum of 30 years imprisonment for serious assaults, kidnaping, and/or murdering a U.S. official, U.S. judge, or Federal law enforcement officer, as well as their immediate family members.
- ⇒ Create a new criminal offense for killing or attempting to kill any public safety officer for a public agency that receives federal funding, including a judicial officer, judicial employee, firefighter, or other State or local employee.
- ⇒ Create a new grant program to States in order to establish witness protection programs.
- ⇒ Increase the penalties for killing or attempting to kill a witness, victim or informant in retaliation for their testimony to a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment.

WITNESSES: The Honorable Jane R. Roth, Chairwoman of Judicial Conference, Committee on Security and Facilities; The Honorable Cynthia Kent, Judge, 114th Judicial District of Texas; The Honorable Paul J. McNulty, U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Virginia; The Honorable John F. Clark, U.S. Marshal, Eastern District of Virginia.

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